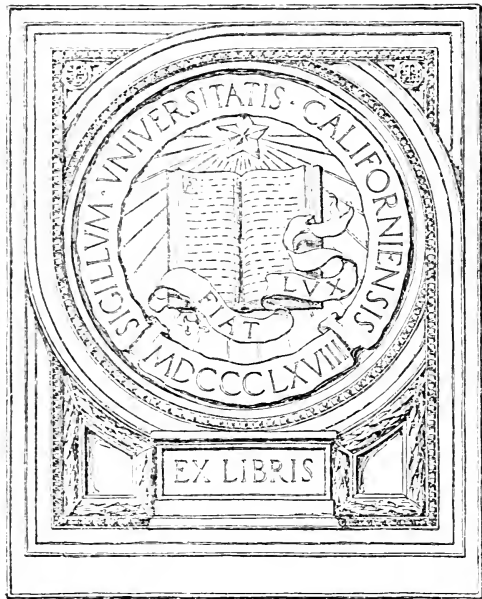


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* OF *

SINALOA, MEXICO.

THE CREDIT FONCIER COMPANY *Sinaloa*

//
(THE HOME CREDIT COMPANY.) *Trans*

A CORPORATION ORGANIZED FOR BUSINESS PURPOSES.

IN

SINALOA, MEXICO.

PROSPECTUS

SHOWING THE CONDITIONS THAT CALLED FOR ITS FORMATION, WITH
A FULL DESCRIPTION OF THE PLANS, LOCATION, AND
THE WORK ALREADY ACCOMPLISHED.

OFFICERS:

ALBERT K. OWEN,	- - -	CHAIRMAN,	- - -	New York City.
JOHN W. LOVELL,	- - -	TREASURER,	- - -	New York City.
D. D. CHIDESTER,	- - -	SECRETARY,	- - -	Chicago.

COLONY OFFICE:

Topolobampo, - - - - - State of Sinaloa, Mexico.

BRANCH OFFICES:

Chicago,	- - -	ROBERT H. COWDREY,	806 Royal Insurance Bldg.
New York,	- - -	ALBERT K. OWEN,	32 Nassau Street.
Enterprise, Kansas,	- - -	C. B. HOFFMAN,	

[Chicago? 1892?]

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THE CREDIT FONCIER COMPANY OF SINALOA, MEXICO.

The impression is as widespread as the globe that monopolies are responsible for many of the bad conditions that surround us, yet to reach and fully convince the millions of people necessary to bring about a change in the policy of any great government would be a task not easily accomplished. It is possible, however, with much less effort, to gather a sufficient number of people together and form a colony where anti-monopoly principles could be applied, and thus make demonstrated fact speak with a force unknown to even the best of theories.

AN ANTI-MONOPOLY COLONY,

with this object in view, has, therefore, been started, with a present membership of over five thousand persons, by Albert K. Owen, C. B. Hoffman, J. M. Limbocker, John W. Lovell and John W. Bridenthal, and associated with them are Robert H. Cowdrey, Dr. M. Fluersheim, Marie Howland, Alvin J. Wilber, C. F. Lindstrom, D. D. Chidester, G. C. Clemens, H. A. Hart, W. A. Porter, E. E. Thornton and William Butler.

To place the plan of this colony before the reader in the clearest possible light two things are necessary—first, the reason why any plan should be proposed; second, the plan itself must be so clearly set forth that the reader can easily understand it.

For this purpose a concise statement of what the social problem is has first been given. Following this the cause of these evil conditions is shown, and from these the conclusion is drawn as to what is necessary to correct them, and, finally, the colony plan, by which it is practically accomplished.

THE NECESSITY FOR A COLONY.

Even the careless observer must have noticed that there is at this time a more widespread inquiry into the causes that affect our social relations than ever before in the history of the world. We hear it from the pulpit, in the banquet halls of the rich and the assembly rooms of the common people, and in all of them this question is discussed with such earnestness as to leave no doubt that they consider it a most important one, even though all its details are not seen.

It was not until man was able to produce more than a bare living that the social problem was made possible. And, for reasons that can be clearly shown, there was no social problem in those days when man produced no more than was indispensable for his own use. As soon, however, as he was able to produce more than the bare necessities of life, it became the custom to exploit, or take from him this surplus, and give it to a favored few, who, it is claimed, were thus made able to secure a higher culture, by reason of the wealth and

leisure thus obtained, than would otherwise have been possible at that time, and that a more rapid advance in civilization was thereby made possible.

Whether this theory was true or false in those days when the production of wealth was not great enough to supply the higher needs of all the people, matters but little to us in this age, for now we have so far subdued the unlimited forces of nature that we are able to produce enough to supply the highest wants of everyone, and, therefore, the conditions are not the same. On the other hand, however, the continuing of this system of exploitation under these changed conditions has produced evils that now threaten the very existence of our civilization. And the question of how these evils may be overcome is the social problem that must be solved.

This enormous increase in our power to produce wealth not only makes this system of exploitation unnecessary, but, as will be shown, even the favored few are no longer benefited by it, and the further progress in civilization is checked. *Because this system of exploitation limits the actual production of wealth to bare necessities for the masses, and to such luxuries only as the favored few desire.*

As this proposition may be said to involve the whole question, it will be necessary to establish it beyond the possibility of a reasonable doubt.

We easily understand that the actual production of wealth must depend not only upon the power to produce, but also upon the demand. Things for which there is no demand are worthless, and therefore will

not be produced even though men starve for want of work to do.

This system of exploitation always reduces the demand, because it takes a part of his production away from the producer and leaves him less able to buy.

With the masses thus made unable to buy as much as they produce, and the favored few unable to consume the surplus, it naturally follows that the actual production of wealth must be greatly reduced, and also that it must concentrate more and more in the hands of the few. And the fact that this tribute must be paid in money instead of in products produces a most unhealthy congestion of the whole system of commercial exchanges, whereby an enormous part of the whole of our industrial energy is consumed in trying to exchange goods for money with which to pay this tribute.

Under these conditions the demand for workers must grow less and less as their producing powers increase. By this means they are forced into a desperate struggle to secure such work as there is, in order that they may live. And because of it even the successful ones are compelled to accept any pay that may be offered for their work, while those who fail to secure it must either steal or starve.

We need only glance at the actual experiences of our every-day life to be convinced that these things are true, and, being thus assured, we must recognize that this system of exploitation, which is a "relic of a barbarous age," is responsible for these evils; and, further, that it also fails to give as many blessings to the favored few as they would otherwise receive under

conditions where the production of wealth was unlimited.

These facts force us to the conclusion that this system of exploitation is unnecessary. That it produces most distressing evils, and defeats the very purpose for which it was instituted. Because: *It is impossible to despoil the masses, without also reducing the production of wealth to a much greater extent.*

THE SOCIAL PROBLEM,

therefore, is: How to secure the full product of their toil to every member of the community.

Thanks to the untiring efforts of those who have given this question their earnest attention, it is not a difficult task at this time to clearly point out the means by which this may be accomplished, and rich and poor alike be blessed by a higher civilization than man has ever before known.

To enter into the long line of reasoning that has led up to these conclusions would be tiresome as well as needless. It is not so important to know how these conclusions have been reached as how near correct they are. To decide this we have only to measure them by the actual experiences of our every-day life, and, finding that they stand this test, we may safely rely upon their being correct.

By this test we have found the cause of the evils; now let us proceed to the practical application of these principles, so that in our day and in our generation their beneficial results may be secured.

History tells us that in former days the privilege of exploiting the masses was granted to the favored few

by the sovereign power, or king. Thus backed by the throne, as well as by the ignorance and superstition of the people, the favored few were able, at that time, to despoil the masses openly, by levying tribute directly on the product of their toil. As the intelligence of the people increased, however, and they gradually outgrew their superstition, it became necessary for the favored few to change their method of collecting this tribute, so that the people might not be able to see that it passed directly into the hands of their despoilers.

Methods, therefore, often change, but the tribute never grows less. On the contrary, as the method has been improved the tribute has been increased, until now the amount taken from the people is greater than ever before in the history of the world. The method by which this tribute is taken at the present time is so well hidden under the regular usages of commerce and trade that but few of the people realize it is being taken from them, and the hundreds of millions of tribute thus taken each year hardly produce more than an ill-defined feeling that something is wrong, while rarely, if ever, is a protest made directly against the system itself. That this tribute is taken from all of the industrious classes; that high and low alike are in its grasp, admits of no questioning. The present condition of all the industrious classes, our merchants, farmers and laborers, testifies to its unlimited power.

THE REMEDY.

Taken in its broad meaning, the word "*monopoly*" represents this power which gives the favored few the legal right to levy tribute on their fellow-men without

giving an equivalent in return. The remedy is, therefore, to do away with monopoly in every form. This remedy is easy to understand, the reasons for it are clear, and in its application it is far from being complicated.

Take away these special rights and privileges, backed as they are by the armed forces of the government, and monopoly will die. Remove this element of force, and tribute will not be paid; the system of exploitation will cease, and the people will be free. Then industry will prosper; the production of wealth will rise to meet the highest needs of the people, whose demand will then be equal to their full producing power. Then work will not be hard to find; grim-visaged want will no longer stare the willing worker in the face, and charity will be unknown.

THE PRACTICAL APPLICATION.

Unaided and alone these colonists have thus far paid in the sum of fifty thousand dollars, with which they have secured and partly paid for their colony lands, situated on the Pacific coast in the State of Sinaloa, Mexico. Great care was used in selecting this site, which combines the great commercial advantages of a fine harbor with unlimited natural fertility of soil. The perfect healthfulness of the climate, evenness of temperature, and natural beauty of the site make this a location that would please even the most exacting person.

The pioneers are now preparing the way for those who are to follow so soon as suitable accommodations have been made. They have already constructed an

irrigating canal eight miles in length that under ordinary conditions would have cost at least two hundred thousand dollars. This canal when completed will be thirty miles long, and run direct from the Fuerte river through the colony lands, through Pacific City and empty into the bay of Topolobampo. The entire cost will be about \$350,000, nearly all of which will be paid for with their own labor. The water will be ready for irrigating several thousand acres of land by May, 1892, thus putting the colonists upon a self supporting basis, without any danger of drought or risk to their crops. The work and all the necessary funds have been given by the members without either begging or borrowing a dollar. Thus far the work has all been preparatory rather than productive. But now, with a finished canal to irrigate their lands, it is possible for the community to begin to be self-supporting, and from this time on the members can go forward as fast as shelter can be provided for them.

The coast steamers, which are under contract to make regular trips to and from the colony, are the only means of transportation at this time. Arrangements for raising the necessary funds have been completed, however, and the work of construction has commenced on a thousand-mile railway that will connect this colony on the Pacific coast with the harbor of Galveston, Texas, on the Gulf of Mexico. This line, as surveyed, runs through a well-peopled district that is rich in agricultural products, and filled with coal, timber and the precious metals, all of which are simply awaiting transportation to the markets of the outside

world. In this connection *The Railway Age* of a recent date says:

"A trans-continental railway, 1,200 miles long, connecting the Pacific Ocean with the Gulf of Mexico, is being constructed by the founders of the colony at Topolobampo Bay. * * * It will be a new thing, and a pleasant one, to see a railway built, owned and operated by its employes, each clerk, trainman and section hand being at the same time a stockholder, more or less bloated." * * *

With this line completed, the transportation facilities will be of the best to and from all parts of the world.

That all this has not been accomplished without spending much in care and hard labor, is not denied. That much more will be required, is also true. But actual experience has shown that, under the inspiration of the new hope that actuates these men, they work like tigers, and accomplish almost marvelous results, happy withal, for they see bright visions of what the future has in store for them and their children.

This colony has no visionary scheme to try; no new religion to establish. It simply makes exploitation impossible, by shutting out all monopolies.

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES.

The land and all other natural resources, as well as all public utilities that are in any way monopolies, or that would in any way confer an unjust advantage if left in private hands, are owned and controlled by the people for their mutual benefit, subject, however, to such rules and regulations as may be made by the members from time to time. *Provided:* That under

no circumstances shall any of these natural resources be sold, mortgaged or alienated in any way by the company or by any of its members.

By this means monopoly is entirely shut out and exploitation is made impossible. In all other matters, however, the people are entirely free to work together (co-operate) or to conduct their private affairs as suits them best, so long as they do not infringe upon the equal rights of others.

THE BASIS OF EXCHANGE

is "a service for a service;" but the adjustment between the members as to the relative exchange value of their products is left to their good sense, and to the general economic laws that govern the cost of production. With those who are not members, however, the usual custom of supply and demand will be the basis of exchange between them and the members.

A TEMPORARY ORGANIZATION,

consisting of nine directors, with Albert K. Owen as chairman, has charge of the colony affairs until the first Tuesday in February, 1893, at which time a stockholders' meeting will be held for the purpose of making

A PERMANENT ORGANIZATION.

At this February meeting, each stockholder personally, or by written proxy, may cast one vote for each share of stock held by him in The Credit Foncier Company. In the meantime, it is the duty of the

temporary directors to draft the principles, charter and by-laws for the guidance of the permanent officers and for the guidance of the business affairs of the colony. A copy is then to be submitted to each member to elicit suggestions and alterations, and when these have been received, the directors shall make a second draft in conformity with the suggestions thus made, and present it to the meeting of the stockholders for them to act upon. At that meeting they shall also elect ten directors, who shall have charge of the business affairs of the colony during the term for which they are elected, subject, however, to such rules and regulations as will maintain and perpetuate the fundamental principles of the colony. These fundamental principles are as practical as they are simple. To apply them no unnatural or even unusual conditions are necessary. The steps required to shut out monopolies having been taken, all further rules and regulations are left entirely in the hands of the people, with absolute liberty to say what they shall be as time and experience show their needs. Voluntary co-operation will be encouraged, but no one will be forced to co-operate against his will. The best advice that experience can furnish will be obtained, but the power to decide the course to be adopted will rest entirely in their hands. In all things, therefore, the people will have the most perfect freedom, except in those things which would confer unjust advantages upon some to the disadvantage of others. These must be owned or at least controlled by the people if all are to be equally free. Under these conditions, who can doubt that most beneficial results will follow? Who can doubt that each one will

receive the full product of his toil, and that perfect justice will be done?

MEMBERSHIP.

The membership fee of \$100 pays its full share of the cost of the land and all immediate expenses for public improvements. The earnings of railways and other public businesses will pay the future public expenses. Therefore no taxes will ever be levied on the people of this colony. Thus a home and sheltering roof, when once obtained, will ever after be secure.

The only expense to the member, therefore, is the membership fee, the whole of which may be paid at once, or only so much as may be agreed upon, and the balance paid out of future earnings in the colony; but it must be remembered that the workers in the ditch are to be supplied with food and clothing; that horses must have feed, and that payments must be made on the purchase price of the land, all of which must come from these fees. For these reasons it is necessary that each new member shall pay in a considerable part of his membership fee before going upon the colony lands, all of which goes into the public treasury, and not into private hands. No salaries are paid to any of the officers outside the colony, and every dollar of the investment is used for colony purposes only.

SECURITY.

In this connection it may be well to state that, even under the most unfavorable conditions, the security of all investments will remain as strong as could be desired. The chance of failure to pay for all the land

may seem like a very remote liability, yet it was deemed best to secure absolute title to such portions of the land as might be paid for, rather than take any risk of losing all because all had not been paid for. This precaution has been taken, and the colony owes nothing on the land, neither are any of the members held liable for the balance remaining unpaid. This has been accomplished by making The Kansas Sinaloa Investment Company a trustee to hold the lands as a whole, to release them in such portions and so fast as they are paid for. There remains, therefore, no chance of loss, even though we failed to pay another dollar, for in that case the proportion we had paid for would be set off to the colony, free of all debt, and the balance not paid for would simply go back to the original owners. Yet, after all this has been said, we realize that it would be much better for the colony if the whole amount needed to fully pay for the land could be secured within a short time, and thus place the colony where no power on earth could dispossess them. To accomplish this is the principal cause of this pamphlet being issued. Millions of dollars are freely given each year to charities that, by their very nature, must degrade and destroy the finest and noblest qualities of manhood and womanhood by making public paupers of those who receive this charity, which, at best, gives only temporary relief.

If this colony offered only temporary relief the founders would not have the heart to work for its success. That it does offer a practical means of obtaining most beneficial results, by giving all an equal chance to prosper according to each individual's indus-

try and ability, is a conviction that makes it seem to them to be worth the work of the best years of their lives to bring about. In seeking for the co-operation of others they ask no more than they have already given in proportion to their private means. They seek no contributions in the name of charity. They simply ask that others shall join in the work of preparing the way that will give thousands of honest and industrious men and women the opportunity to help themselves. They believe the work in hand is grand enough and broad enough to enlist the active support of every one who loves justice and his fellow-man. They see thousands of weary mothers and struggling fathers who make them wish for the "Queen of Sheba's" wealth with which to give these people homes and replace their worrisome care with hope of something more than a mere existence. They have progressed so far that ultimate success is now assured, but notwithstanding this, they realize that much more rapid progress might be made if their efforts were re-enforced by those of others who could aid them if so inclined.

Their sole aim has been to found an anti-monopoly colony pure and simple. This is the whole sum and substance of their desires, and, as previously stated, no new scheme is to be tried, no new religion established. The utmost liberty of thought and action is guaranteed to every one. The private affairs of the individual members will not in any way be interfered with or changed from existing conditions except that no one can obtain an unjust advantage of others, and every one be able to secure an equal chance to prosper according to their industry and ability. The founders of this

colony court the closest scrutiny of all their acts, both past and present. They have guarded every point so that speculation has been made impossible in all matters relating to the management, and so that not a dollar can be made out of it by those in charge of its affairs. They desire, and will accept with pleasure, any and all suggestions that will tend to permanently establish and secure the peace, prosperity and happiness of the people in this colony.

THE NATURAL RESOURCES.

Unless some explanation is made, the first impression of the reader will naturally be that the colonists must enter a new and wild country, where they will have to battle with rugged nature for supremacy. But happily this is far from being true. When they cross the border line they enter *the old*, and leave behind them *the new*. The wild beast and desolate wilderness are nowhere to be met with on the colony lands. On the contrary, the deep green waters of the Pacific Ocean bound their lands on the side toward the setting sun, and all about them the sloping plain that reaches to the far off hills of the Sierra Madre mountains, is dotted with towns and cities that are inhabited by a generous and even wealthy people, who welcome them with a hospitality that knows no bounds. That the quiet contentment of these well-fed and well-housed people contrasts sharply with the restless activity of the north-man's life, is true; but the contrast also shows that, if measured by results, the advantages are not wholly on one side. The lack of transportation has made it useless for them to produce more than they required

for their own use; of this, however, they have abundance, and, as may be seen in those districts where the "Iron Horse" has entered, their industry increases fully as fast as it becomes profitable for them to do so. To these people the colonists appear as brothers, and by them and their government they have been welcomed as forerunners of a higher progress and a greater prosperity than they have ever before known. The wealthy and educated classes show them every consideration possible. The colonists, therefore, do not enter as strangers into a wilderness, but more as members of an old community in which much of the hard and trying work of the pioneer has already been accomplished. The natural resources for the production of wealth are unlimited. All the building material needed is ready at hand in inexhaustible quantity. With a rich soil sixteen feet deep, and a climate neither hot nor cold, it is not surprising that all kinds of vegetation should grow with marvelous rapidity. Surrounded by these conditions, and with every natural source of wealth simply waiting for the hand of man to turn this into a veritable paradise, in which his labor will be rewarded a thousand-fold, and all that is best, all that is noblest in his nature developed to its full fruition, can we doubt that good results will be attained; can we question the advisability of making these things possible? If not, then let each one do his share, and it will be speedily accomplished.

Now, in closing, let it be said that here for the first time in the history of the world, so far as known, it is found that industry is organized upon the basis of natural law; or, to put it in other words, the shackles that

formerly bound and crippled industry have been cast aside, thus leaving it free to produce unlimited wealth. Think for a moment what this statement means. Let your imagination grasp the far-reaching results that must follow if this broad assertion be true. Broad as it is, however, the founders of this colony assert that in its practical application the plan must stand this test or be considered as a total failure. They hold it as a cardinal principle that no industrious person, either man, woman, or child, who is willing to work must ever enter this colony and find that there is no work for them to do. Not that all can at once find the way open for them to enter just the occupation that suits them best, but that all persons at all times will be able to obtain such employment as will give them an abundance of the necessities of life, and that such a thing as scarcity of work will be unknown. To those who ask "What will I find to do?" the reply is "you know best what occupation suits you, and therefore, with the assurance that some kind of work will be ready for you to do at any time you come, you can safely go and view the different openings for yourself without risk to those who are dependent upon your work."

Having thus given an extended statement of nearly every important detail of the work we now urgently solicit your co-operation and aid in proportion to your resources and abilities.

Address all communications and make all remittances payable to

THE CREDIT FONCIER COMPANY,

806 Royal Insurance Building,

Chicago, Ill.

The following pages, from "A Tramp in Society," by Robert H. Cowdrey, F. J. Schulte & Co., Publishers, Chicago, answer so many questions that naturally arise in this connection, that we have induced the publishers to allow us to insert them here.

THE OLD DU PAGE FARM.

THE old Du Page farm, with its many hundred acres of land, remained intact, as a relic of the days when all the country round about it was a beautiful prairie studded here and there with farm-houses, and the thriving young city of Chicago was yet miles away.

The hale old farmer and his wife had left the land to their children as an inheritance that gave promise of supporting them in luxury for the balance of their natural lives, without work or a thought of care; for the great city had grown wondrously, and its borders had extended until now it was pressing close upon the boundary line of the farm. The broad acres were ripe for subdivision into city lots.

Mr. Bartlett had a scheme that called for just such a place as this in order to perfect it, and when the estate was settled and the farm was offered for sale, he readily became its owner. It was a big price to pay, and he felt the strain on his resources; but he willingly took the burden on his shoulders, for the results that he believed he could accomplish would be worth the sacrifice.

When the arrangements had been completed and the transfer made, he poured many thousands of dollars into the hands of the heirs, for the land that their father had bought, only a few years before, for a few dollars an acre. And when the deed was placed on record, there were added to it the significant words:

"This land shall be free forever. Occupancy and use shall be the only title."

It was not long after the news had gone abroad that land could be freely had for use at the Du Page farm before men were on the ground busily engaged in digging up the earth, forming it into beds and setting out plants for vegetable gardens. Then farmers came, and, looking over the level meadows stretching away as far as the eye could reach, they plowed and sowed their grain, and the old farm looked prosperous once more. The workers were encouraged, for the future seemed filled with hope.

To those who had not the means with which to build them homes, Mr. Bartlett pointed out how he had built his store, how he had paid for it out of his profits as the payments became due. It was easy to find men who would trust to their future crops for payment, and so an army of masons and house-builders were soon busy at work, and buildings grew and multiplied with amazing quickness, although at first the people were compelled to house a number of families in a single building till time would permit each one to have his own. Then came the merchants with stocks of goods, ready to supply the men and exchange with the gardeners and trust the farmers until their crops were out of the ground. Then the large manufacturers were attracted to the busy town. They looked with longing eyes upon the land that was free, and as soon as their buildings were completed their wheels were set in motion, and the hum of these busy hives of industry was added to the rapidly increasing prosperity of the community.

Mr. Bartlett was never happier than when he was among these busy people, and every new improvement, every happy face he saw, made him rejoice when he thought that their world was brighter and they were happier because he had lived.

The old farm had been transformed by the rapid increase in population, and the business portion was known as the suburban city of "Freeland." The railway accommodations made it so easy to go and come that Mr. Bartlett found no trouble in inducing Mr. Sears to go with him to see the wonderful city.

It was a glorious day in autumn when they stepped from the cars at Freeland Station. The farmers' crops had been gathered, and the industry of the people had been so richly rewarded that they were not burdened with debt, and were able to enjoy the luxuries the other producers made, thus increasing the prosperity of all.

As Mr. Sears stood on the platform with Mr. Bartlett, watching the passengers leave the train, he noticed several who were evidently new arrivals, for they stood looking hesitatingly about them. A pleasant-faced man stepped toward them and inquired if they were looking for work, and after a moment's conversation directed them to the "Bureau of Information." Mr. Bartlett and Mr. Sears followed them.

"We may as well begin with these new arrivals," said Mr. Bartlett, "and watch how they succeed in their first efforts to obtain a living."

"There seem to be a good many of them," said Mr. Sears in reply. "You must find some trouble in getting work for all?"

"You can see for yourself," said Mr. Bartlett complacently. "Of course this was all an experiment, and I had nothing to guide me in forming plans for them to follow. So I have made no effort to check the natural course of events, and every one is perfectly free to do as he desires so long as he does not infringe on the rights of any other. The result is we

find that man is naturally good and inclined to be a happy animal when he has perfect freedom."

Mr. Sears looked puzzled for a moment, and then said: "I can't see how you get along that way. Certainly there must be some who are careless, or ugly, or mean enough to trample on the rights of others if not restrained by law."

"You must keep in mind that the conditions and surroundings of the people here are vastly different from those you are accustomed to deal with. Here no one feels the fear of want. They are not careworn or over-worked, and you must admit that these things tend to reduce bad temper and increase the desire to deal fairly. Then, too, the future is full of hope, and life is worth living. They see that in order to be happy it is not necessary to rob others of their happiness, but rather that it is necessary for those about them to be happy in order that they may enjoy the highest good. To these people it is evident now that 'an injury to one is the concern of all.' We have had cases of careless intrusion, but none that could be called willful trampling on the rights of others."

"How do you account for it?" inquired Mr. Sears, evidently somewhat mystified.

"It will seem natural enough if you but think a moment. If you invited the most careless, mean, or ugly man you know of to your home, and he acted like a gentleman, would you be astonished? No! But you would be if he did not. Or suppose a woman who had never been accustomed to refined society were placed among the guests at your table; would she willfully do an act that would offend in the slightest degree? No. Her whole attention would be absorbed in trying to act in accord with the law that she knows

by instinct as well as the most cultured do. But change the conditions that surround your guests. Let them be in fear of want. Let them realize that you have not provided enough for them all, and you will be unable to discern any difference in the actions of any of them as they struggle to satisfy their hunger. All the laws you could make would not restrain your cultured guests from grabbing that which they fear to lose. You cannot make men good by enacting laws. You cannot prevent crime by punishing the offender. You cannot keep children out of factories by making laws that punish the parents whom hunger has compelled to make their children self-supporting. By law you cannot force the housewife to be neat and clean; but the unwritten law of public opinion makes it a pleasure for her to excel in neatness. Without this public opinion to enforce your laws, they are useless. When it is present, law is not required. All laws that would prevent, by force, the unseemly scrambling of your guests for food, would seem to be necessary just so long only as you do not change the conditions that surround them and take away the cause that produces this result. But it would seem to be the better plan to put them in a position where such a law was not required."

"But you must have some laws for the guidance of public affairs," said Mr. Sears, almost bewildered by the statement Mr. Bartlett had made.

"Oh, certainly, but you will recognize the difference between such laws as are intended as mere instructions for the guidance of the people and those which are for the purpose of forcing them to deal justly with one another," replied Mr. Bartlett as they entered the office of the Bureau of Information.

The large reception-room was filled with men, some of whom were carefully studying cards of information that were placed along the walls, from which many of them obtained the knowledge they desired; and with a question or two as to the character of work, or the location, they hurried away. As Mr. Bartlett and Mr. Sears entered they heard the agent at the desk inquire of the man before him:

"Have you a trade?"

"Yes, I am a metal-spinner."

"There's a good place for you at Daly's Brass-works."

And with the written address in hand, the man turned toward the door, while the agent pleasantly inquired of the next one:

"What is your trade?"

"Cabinet-maker, sir."

"They want a good man at the organ factory." And, pointing out through the open door-way, he directed the man to the building, in plain sight, and turned to the next one.

"I am a book-keeper," said a shabbily dressed man of middle age, without waiting to be questioned.

"Johnston, Jones & Co. want an A No. 1 man," said the agent, a little doubtfully, as if questioning his ability.

"I am a little out of practice," was the significant reply.

"There are other places where it might be easier for you at first. You might try one of them."

"I want something to keep me from starving. I will do anything you say, sir," replied the man humbly.

"There. They want a bill clerk," said the agent as

he handed the man a card. "I guess that will be a good place for you to start."

"I am a dock laborer," said the next man.

"We have no vessels to unload here," said the agent laughing. "But you are willing to work at anything, I suppose?"

"If there's a living in it, I am," was the cautious reply.

"No trouble about that. You take this card to the big saw-mill, and they will give you work handling lumber."

"I am a laborer," said the next applicant.

"How will working in the brick-yards suit you?"

"What's the pay?"

"More than you ever received," replied the agent, smiling good-naturedly. "You try it for a while and see. Just take the car that runs west and tell the conductor to let you off at Henley's yard."

"We will follow this one," said Mr. Bartlett. "He begins at the bottom of the ladder, and we will see what success he has."

"I should suppose you would soon fill up all the places at this rate," said Mr. Sears, when they were seated in the car.

"There has always been more work than workers," replied Mr. Bartlett. "Each new arrival increases the demand as well as the supply."

"The place is growing very rapidly now, and of course the demand is extra heavy," said Mr. Sears. "But when you have settled down to your level, you will find that the supply will increase faster than the demand."

Mr. Bartlett's eyes twinkled good-naturedly, as they always did when he caught his questioner off his guard.

"I have always found that man's desires increased as fast as his ability to gratify them," was the half-inquiring answer.

"I think there's no doubt of that," readily assented Mr. Sears.

"Then please tell me how the supply can increase faster than the demand?" And Mr. Bartlett looked quizzically at his friend while awaiting a reply.

"I can't answer that," replied Mr. Sears, after a moment's thought, "except by saying that my business experience seems to justify my statement."

"Your business experience has been obtained under conditions that did not allow the workers to gratify their desires as fast as their power to produce was increased, and of course congestion followed. Here their ability to gratify their desires is only limited by their production."

"Do you mean to say that this prosperity is to continue year after year just as you have it now?" inquired Mr. Sears incredulously.

"Nothing can prevent it so long as there is free land," said Mr. Bartlett, positively. "I underestimate the amount when I say that the average production of each day's work is sufficient to supply the needs of thirty days. If the producer receives it all, he is in a position to exchange his work for those things which others have produced, and thus to gratify his desires to the full extent of his production. How stagnation can occur under these conditions I cannot see. But if any portion is taken from him for which nothing is given in return, then I can see how great fortunes can be built up, and industry grow stagnant, from the congestion that must follow whenever the producer's ability to buy is less than his production."

"But the men who take from the producers must have just that much more ability to buy," interposed Mr. Sears. "And this would make up for the loss of their trade, would it not?"

"If they were to buy the products of labor it would," replied Mr. Bartlett. "But instead of doing this they take so large a share that they cannot consume the product it represents, and so they take money and bonds and stocks, and store them away to draw on the products of labor as they desire, while the wealth produced by the workers is left in the hands of business men to dispose of as best they can."

"How can free land change these conditions?"

"You saw how Crusoe could take all that the fishers produced by making them pay a tribute for the use of the land, and then how every one of them received all he produced as soon as they stopped paying tribute? In the same way, if the land is free, our workers will be able to keep what they produce, and a more equal distribution of wealth will result. There will not be equality of wealth, for that would mean that some were getting more than they produced, which would be robbery. But the difference in conditions would be due to difference in ability, and there would be neither the extremely rich nor the very poor."

"Do you own the street-car line?" inquired Mr. Sears as he noticed the conductor collecting fares.

"No, sir. We don't allow monopolies like that to exist here. The people lay the tracks and keep them in repair at public expense, and then lease them to the company that will do the work for the least fare. In other words, we always discourage monopolies and extend private enterprise into every branch of business

that is controlled by competition. The keeping of highways in repair we recognize as one of the chief functions of government."

"Why do you call the street-car business a monopoly any more than the ice business."

"Well," said Mr. Bartlett, laughing at the comparison, "the ice wagons can go on any street; and if one company charges more than it is entitled to for the service rendered, other ice wagons can go on that street, and compete with them for the trade, and thus bring prices down to a fair amount. But when a street-car company has its tracks in the street it shuts out competition, and can charge more than the fair proportion of profit for the work it performs."

"How do you pay for laying the track?" inquired Mr. Sears.

"All public improvements are paid for by the people in proportion to the benefit they receive," said Mr. Bartlett. "The users of land that is supplied with water or gas, or that has sewers or paved streets or any other public improvement, pay for these just in proportion to the benefit conferred, and in this way all the expenses of government are paid."

"How do you find the relative proportions that each should pay?"

"You can see that land which is located so as to give the user all these advantages would be more desirable than other land which gave only a part or none of them, and that these various improvement values would correctly determine the relative proportions each of the users should pay. This public improvement value which attaches to the land is, therefore, the basis upon which we estimate the amount of

benefit the user receives, and from this we easily arrive at the proportion he should pay for the use of these public improvements."

"I see how it works," said Mr. Sears quickly. "The increased value is there, and whoever uses the land gets the benefit of it and therefore must pay the cost of the improvements."

"Yes, that's it," said Mr. Bartlett. "Well, here we are at Henley's." As the car stopped and the three men started toward the brick-yard Mr. Bartlett turned to the laborer and inquired what it was that had induced him to come to Freeland.

"Well, I heard that a man had a better chance to get along here, an' so I thought I'd try it."

"What wages will you expect to receive?" inquired Mr. Sears, somewhat interestedly.

"Well, I figger it about like this: I'll take the first thing I can get to do that will keep me a-goin' till I can look around a bit and see whether I can do better. If I can't, then I know I'm getting what's due me where I am. Then, too," he added, "if there's lots of work, I've no fear but the wages will be good."

"The Henley boys came here as workers just like this man," said Mr. Bartlett.

The laborer stepped forward to the foreman, who, after a moment's conversation, and as the laborer started to pull off his coat, said:

"Never fear about the wages. You will get several days' living out of each day's work, easy enough."

"That is the only true way to measure wages, after all," said Mr. Bartlett as he overheard the remark. "Wages may seem to be high in dollars and cents, but if other things are equally high the workers get no benefit."

The laborer was soon at work tossing the new brick into the wagons, and the visitors turned away to find one of the Henley boys.

"If I had a few sheep I might come here and use all of your vacant land to feed them on," said Mr. Sears, inquiringly.

"Certainly."

"Then the next man that came would have no land to use until he agreed to pay me tribute. Isn't that true?"

"Oh, no! You would be welcome to use, or pretend to use, any or all of this vacant land in any way you desire until some of it was needed for a higher use. When that time came we would exercise the right of eminent domain, and pay you for any of your improvements that were taken or destroyed."

"That being true, you must admit that no one here has absolute possession of his land," said Mr. Sears, knowingly.*

"Let's see. You claim to have exclusive ownership and absolute possession of the land upon which your house is built. Yet a private corporation may at any time tear down your house and run its tracks over the land where it now stands. Here only the people can exercise this right which you have granted to private individuals, and if it be true that you have absolute possession of your land, it must be equally so of ours."

"But suppose that population increases until there is only standing-room for the people. What then?"

"Oh, I think we would have to build higher houses and have our farms on the roofs," replied Mr. Bartlett, laughing at the suggestion. "But to answer your question seriously: If Nature ever does fail to pro-

* See "Driven from Sea to Sea."

vide enough for a'l the people on this earth, it will be a sad day for humanity, but even then we would have the satisfaction of feeling that we were dealing justly by each other and that each one had an equal opportunity to get a share."

THE CITY OF FREELAND.

"If wages are high in all the industries here," resumed Mr. Sears as they walked slowly along, "then, according to your own statement, clothing, and food, and houses must also be high; and the workers out here will gain nothing. So where is the advantage?"

"We are as yet a comparatively small city," replied Mr. Bartlett; "but we produce about twelve millions of wealth a year. All of that goes to the men who produce it. We do not pay out a cent for the use of the land."

"Do you mean the merchants and manufacturers as well as the laborers?" inquired Mr. Sears.

"Certainly; they are producers just the same as the others," replied Mr. Bartlett quickly. "With you the man who hires a farm gives from a third to one-half of his production for the use of the land; the men in cities give about the same proportion of their wages or profits for the land they use. So that it seems fair to assume that the industrious classes are forced to give from one-third to one-half of all they produce to the owners of the land, as tribute for its use. Here the producer pays nothing."

"Therefore the workers get all they produce," interposed Mr. Sears. "That is very plain, but it seems rather strange."

"There is nothing so strange about it," replied Mr. Bartlett, evidently well pleased at the readiness with which his friend caught the idea. "It is easy to

figure it. Take any town of this size, with the same volume of trade, and you can see that the rent of the business and residence property would nearly equal the figure I have named. And the rent of such farms as these about here would certainly make up the balance."

"Yes, I think that is true enough," replied Mr. Sears frankly. "So you think these people are benefited to the extent of a third to one-half of their total production, do you?"

"Yes, and much more. How much I am unable to say. For, if that amount was taken from them, they would not only be that much poorer, but their purchasing power would be lessened just in proportion, and therefore their production would have to be reduced to prevent congestion of the products of their labor. Then work would become scarce, some of them would be idle, and a struggle for the chance to work would result. Business would stagnate, factories would close their doors, and wages in all occupations would fall to the lowest level. Thus a thousand bad results would follow the loss of their earnings, in comparison to which the tribute taken would be quite insignificant. To realize the difference you have but to look at the happy workers you see about you here, and compare them with your care-worn, hunger-haunted human machines, whose only hope in life is that they may get work so that they may get bread to give them strength to continue at work until death ends their misery." And Mr. Bartlett emphasized his remarks by motioning toward the crowds of men who were working all about them.

"They remind me of the stories I have read of the happy nature of the black slaves, who laughed and sang their negro melodies, regardless of their bondage."

"Yes," interposed Mr. Bartlett almost bitterly. "But your industrial slavery has accomplished what chattel slavery never could. It has crushed hope, even in the black man. He no longer has the heart to sing. The struggle for existence is too intense."

"Ah! Mr. Bartlett, pleased to see you."

"This is my friend Mr. Sears, Mr. Henley. It was he who helped me when I was a tramp," added Mr. Bartlett by way of explanation.

"You helped one of the noblest men God ever put on earth," said John Henley, fervently, as he grasped Mr. Sears' hand. "To him I owe my chance to get ahead, and the happiness of my wife and two little ones."

"He seems to be doing a noble work here," replied Mr. Sears, quietly.

"Well, I get my pay a thousand times over, in seeing men like John so prosperous and contented," laughed Mr. Bartlett. "I want to have Mr. Sears get acquainted with the conditions that exist out here," he continued as he turned toward Mr. Henley. "And I wonder if you would object to telling him your experience."

"Not at all," was the prompt reply. "I never seemed to get along before I came here. I lived poorly and worked hard, but I only got enough to keep me going, and I never had any hope of getting ahead until I came and saw how well others were doing. I was a common every-day laborer, and the first thing I did was to load brick at Lasher's yard, just beyond us here. I got good pay, and soon had enough saved to get a home for us, and by the time that was paid for I had a fair knowledge of how bricks were made. And as the demand was more than

the yards could supply, I looked around for a place of my own. Mr. Lasher said there would be more brick needed than could be made if the yards were not increased, and he helped me pick out a good piece of clay land, and here I am. My brother and I made our first payment on the machinery out of our earnings, and soon we will be out of debt and get on all right."

"Why could you not have done that anywhere, if you had a little start to begin with?" inquired Mr. Sears.

"Well, that little start was what bothered me," laughed John, shaking his head as if unable to explain why, but conscious of the fact, just the same. "Then, too," he continued, "we could not get land without paying heavily for it, and that prevented us from starting. More than this, the supply of brick in every other place except this is away beyond the demand, and we could not get into the trade as we did here, where the builders were waiting for them."

"Do your men get as good wages as Mr. Lasher paid you?" inquired Mr. Sears.

"Yes, sir."

"How can that be, if Mr. Lasher was paying you all you were worth?" And Mr. Sears glanced toward Mr. Bartlett, for he remembered that gentleman's statement of how all men received their full production. "After his men have received their pay," interposed Mr. Bartlett, "if John has produced anything it will be there to pay him, won't it?"

"Yes, yes; but I thought I had found a flaw in your reasoning," laughed Mr. Sears. "But I don't see how you know just what each one's share is. Here are a hundred men, we will say. Some are doing one thing,

some another. It is but fair to suppose there are as many different grades of ability as there are men. Yet the product of their united labor is so many thousand brick. How in the world are you able to find out just the portion each man has produced?"

"I guess you will have to answer that, Mr. Bartlett," said John, as he looked up at him with a confused expression on his face.

"I will put the question in another way, and then you will be able to answer it easily," said Mr. Bartlett. "What would you do if your men did not earn their pay?"

"I'd have to send them off," said John, utterly unable to understand the relation between the two questions.

"And what would they do if you did not pay them enough?"

"They'd go elsewhere."

"And if all the yards combined against them and refused to pay all they earned, what then?"

"I don't know what others would do," said John quickly. "But if Lasher had tried that with me, I would have started a yard of my own."

"There you have it," said Mr. Bartlett exultingly. "John could not fathom the why and wherefore, but he well knew how to get at the practical solution of it. There is the whole of the plan of competition in his reply. If the workers get too little, they are free to make brick for themselves. If they ask too much, the Henley Brothers don't have to pay it. And the natural adjustment which these interests bring about settles positively the just proportion each one should receive."

"And is the saving in rent divided in the same way?"

inquired Mr. Sears as they turned toward the cars again.

"Certainly. If it were not, there would be so much profit in the brick business that the workers would all start yards of their own."

"Then it is the opportunity to freely use the land to employ their own labor that gives these men the full production of their toil when they work for others, is it?"

"That's the effect free land produces when competition is not bound and held in check as it is with you," replied Mr. Bartlett earnestly.

"I can see how it works where men have a chance to go into business for themselves like the Henleys in brick-making, or in farming, or in mining of any kind," said Mr. Sears meditatively. "But put my factory out here, and how could my employes help themselves if I refused to give them their share?"

Mr. Bartlett smiled as he replied: "I can tell just what is passing through your mind, Sears. You imagine this to be some new scheme that is governed by laws entirely different from those under which you transact your business. But this is not the case at all. The only change is that we do not divide the product of our labor to give the land-owner a part. Our business laws are, therefore, the same as yours, and you well know that if you refused to pay your men the regular market rate of wages they would go elsewhere; and so they would here. More than this, your men would leave you under present conditions, and also in a city where work is scarce and very hard to get, while here they would be able to step into other places at a moment's notice. You pay your men their present wages because you are forced to do so by the

law of competition, which decrees that to be their just share of what is left after the land-owner has been paid. Here you would be forced to pay more because the amount to be divided is greater. And, as your own wages are paid on the same basis, they would also be much larger than now."

"In other words, you mean that what the land-owner fails to get is divided justly between the employer and his men."

"Yes, so long as competition is free."

Mr. Sears was thoughtfully silent for a moment, and then, looking up at his friend, he said inquiringly:

"If what you say is true, then I as an employer cannot pay more than the regular market rate of wages?"

"Not without drawing upon your own share."

"But I mean more than that," said Mr. Sears earnestly. "Could my business stand the pressure of paying my men their full share?"

"No, sir. You would be foolish to try it."

"But I have," was the almost despairing reply.

The changed voice and manner of his friend startled Mr. Bartlett, and after a hasty, searching glance he inquired as to the cause.

"Well, you remember what I said at the 'Charity Ball,' don't you?" said Mr. Sears as he struggled bravely to brace himself for the ordeal of relating his business troubles.

"About your determination to pay your employes more? Yes, I remember."

"Well, I acted contrary to your advice," continued Mr. Sears. "To tell the truth, I could no longer stand the torture of seeing those starving women and ill-paid men working for me on such soul-destroying terms. So I began paying them more and more, until

my partner, Plumb, declared he would not risk it any further, and offered to either sell or buy. I knew the wages would go back to the old figure if I sold, and so I bought his share. This put me in debt, and the higher wages I was paying made it cost more to make my goods than my competitors paid, so that I soon found that I was at a terrible disadvantage in selling. My financial affairs are in bad shape, and, with my desire to help those I employ while watching my own interests, I find myself between the devil and the deep sea."

"It's a bad piece of business," said Mr. Bartlett, evidently worried at the position of his friend. "Your sympathies have run away with your business judgment. That's evident."

"Yes," replied Mr. Sears. "And when I look back and see how little I have accomplished, and how much you have been able to do here, I have not even the satisfaction of feeling that I have done much good."

"That's the difference in results between granting charity and giving justice a chance to do its perfect work. But I do wish you had taken my advice. I do, indeed, for I am heavily in debt at the present time, and trying to clear off the mortgage I put on my store when I bought this land. But what I have is at your service. Don't forget that." And Mr. Bartlett impressively placed his hand on the arm of his friend as they rose to leave the car.

"Oh, I'll pull through all right," was the seemingly confident reply. But the troubled sigh that followed was a much better indication of the burden he was carrying.

"Can't we go through some of these factories?" asked Mr. Sears as they reached the walk.

"That's just what I intend we shall do," replied Mr. Bartlett. "I want you to see for yourself how slight a change is necessary to better the condition of the workers. Our shops are better, and more comfortable in many ways. The workers here are men, for we have no women or children at hard labor of any kind in this place. Their natural protectors are able to support them, and would feel disgraced if they had to ask their children to assist them in earning a living.

"This is my friend Mr. Sears," he continued, as they entered the iron-works and met the manager. "He is testing our methods here, and wants all the information he can get."

"Mr. Bartlett puts it a little broadly," replied Mr. Sears. "Yet in the main he has stated what is true."

"I dare say you find the same trouble in understanding our ways that most of our visitors do," said Mr. James, the gentleman addressed; "that is, how the employer and his men can both be benefited at the same time by the change. It is remarkable how ready most of them are to believe that either one might be, but that both can be at the same time seems to be a puzzle they cannot understand. I suppose they have been drilled so long to believe the interests of the employer are antagonistic to those of the workers that it is almost impossible for them to understand that they are one and the same. Isn't that true, Mr. Bartlett?"

"Yes, and I think Mr. Sears has experienced the same feeling since he has been here."

"If there are no antagonistic interests between the employer and the men he employs, what makes the appearance of it?" inquired Mr. Sears.

"Even the appearances are not all that way," replied Mr. James. "For when you find a general in-

crease in the profits of business men and manufacturers you also find an increase in the wages of their clerks or workmen. When you find them struggling to keep out of bankruptcy you find wages and salaries are also low. This life-and-death struggle that afflicts the employers as well as the men makes the same appearance of antagonism between them that is to be seen when drowning men struggle for the possession of life preservers because there are not enough for all. But there is enough produced, and therefore scarcity is not the cause. On the contrary, this appearance of antagonism is due to the fact that so large a portion is taken as tribute for the use of the land that the employer and his men are forced to fight for possession of the scant supply that remains.

"There are more than enough opportunities for all to support life, but the land-speculators hold them out of use until the drowning merchants and workers are forced by their necessities to agree to give everything they obtain above a living. The moment these opportunities are opened so that men may freely use them, we find not even the appearance of antagonism remains. Here we do not allow any one to hold land except for use; and, as a result, we have no strikes, no riots, no bloodshed, and all are prosperous and free from care. We never think of asking men to work for us for less than they can earn by working for themselves, and we do not have to pay them more, because they willingly accept that amount. And as the opportunity to employ himself costs the worker nothing at all, he is sure to get all he produces."

"Then you have solved the labor question," said Mr. Sears inquiringly.

"Judging from results, we certainly have."

"But there are workers who have never employed themselves. How do they know what they could earn?" inquired Mr. Sears.

"You have never gone to Washington to accept the government's offer to redeem its paper money at its full face value," replied Mr. James earnestly. "Yet you obtain the full benefit of that offer here, simply because the opportunity is open to you. In the same way, whenever free land offers men all they produce, they can obtain the full benefit of that offer in any place they choose to work. And, like your paper money, the practical effect is sure to be that nothing less than full face value will ever be offered. Thus free land makes free men, even though they do not go to the land to accept its offer."

"I see," interposed Mr. Sears. "The amount the land will pay is the basis of all wages, and the pay of each depends upon the relative value of his work."

"That's it exactly," said Mr. James. "Now you can see the benefit when that offer is not reduced by having to pay tribute for the use of the land. My men will tell you that they get all they produce, and that is all they could get by working for themselves."

"If that is true, where do you get your profit?" inquired Mr. Sears.

"My wages arise from my production, and if I add nothing to the value of the goods you may rest assured the consumer will refuse to pay me for my work. Instead of my men trying to sell the goods they make, I do that work for them, and we all produce just the same as if each one made and sold his own product. The feeling against the middle-man is largely due to the fact that the price he receives for the goods is often many times more than the workers get for mak-

ing them. The tribute the land-owners receive is all concentrated in that price, and makes it seem quite large; but if it was not figured in, it would be seen that there is but little left for the merchant's wages. In this place we pay no tribute, and the problem of giving each one his just share is much simplified. We find that competition does this most justly, and so our relations to each other are perfectly harmonious and entirely satisfactory to all concerned."

"With such high wages to your men," said Mr. Sears, "I don't see how you can sell your goods to the outside world. I suppose you depend on the home market for your sales."

"We sell our goods all over the world," replied Mr. James proudly. "We could bankrupt every outside competitor if we tried."

"What?" exclaimed Mr. Sears, in astonishment, as he turned toward Mr. Bartlett, to see if he sanctioned such statements.

"Well, that's hardly a fair proposition," said Mr. Bartlett good-naturedly. "You would be able to do that only so long as the manufacturers in other places had not the same advantages that you have."

"Advantages!" And Mr. Sears looked more puzzled than before. "What advantages can there be in paying high wages? Don't you see that it must increase the cost of production?"

"We find it costs less," replied Mr. James.

"Mr. James' competitors," said Mr. Bartlett, "have to pay the land-owners their tribute in addition to paying wages to their men. Mr. James pays higher wages, it's true, but he pays no tribute for the use of the land. I think you will admit that this saving in cost gives him an advantage which makes him more than able to

compete with those who pay only starvation wages to their men."

"Then the land-owner is a sort of useless partner who draws his profits without producing anything," said Mr. Sears, laughingly. "It looks like the cost of production depends upon the profits this silent partner takes, more than it does on the wages of the men."

"We have dissolved the partnership out here," said Mr. James.

"Do you feel that your title to the land is sufficiently secure for your improvements?" inquired Mr. Sears. "Suppose you go out of business, and fail to use the land. Can't some one else take it and the improvements together?"

"Yes, after paying for them, but not before. You see, Mr. Sears, we act on the principle that what a man has produced is his against all the world, and under no condition has one person the right to take the product of another's toil without giving an equivalent."

"There can be no question about that being right," said Mr. Sears as they turned to leave the building.

"Well, you noticed nothing very strange, did you?" inquired Mr. Bartlett, when they had gained the street. "It is as plain and simple as every-day life, is it not? Everything swings along with absolute precision because it conforms to natural and not to man-made law. The only radical change is the absence of the land-owner, and this is simply returning to natural conditions rather than otherwise. Did you know that in olden times the law of Massachusetts was almost identical with our provision here that land shall be free?"

Bancroft Library

"No, indeed. I supposed this was something unheard of before now."

"Well, you will find in the early laws of Massachusetts the provision that if any man holds land idle for three years he loses his title to it, and the courts shall make it free to those who will use it."

"There's nothing new under the sun," said Mr. Sears. "But I suppose people now-a-days would say it was an old Puritanic law that was not worth while considering."

"It's a curiosity, nevertheless, and shows that they recognized the fact that land was different from other things. But they, no doubt, realized that it was necessary to secure the user in his absolute possession of the land; and like a great many persons at the present time they made the mistake of jumping to the false conclusion that private ownership is the only means by which private possession can be secured."

"The wonderful simplicity of this change made me question its efficiency at first," said Mr. Sears thoughtfully. "But my doubts are rapidly vanishing under the pressure of what I see here. Yet there are two things that I desire to have explained before I will be satisfied. Tell me, do you control the saloons? And how can the farmers be benefited by this change?"

"We have no saloons that could properly be so called. We have no business to give them. I think this is due to several causes, first among which is the absence of that life-and-death struggle for existence, with its terribly exhausting strain. Life is worth too much here to be destroyed or even broken by dissipation; and public opinion would be outraged by a case of drunkenness to such an extent that the offender would not care to repeat it. Liquor can be freely

had, but it is sold as any other commodity is, in an open manner, without restraint. But a drinking-place as such is not known here. Public opinion seems to be in favor of other meeting-places."

"I can't understand this power of public opinion," said Mr. Sears.

"You see its effects every day. In spite of laws to the contrary, public opinion holds your saloon doors open day and night. Why, then, when it changes, should it not have the power to close them?"

"We have not had much chance to see the residence portion of Freeland," remarked Mr. Bartlett as they walked along, "but, as I told you, we do not pride ourselves on the number, but rather on the character of the changes we have made, and you can easily imagine the conditions that surround the home-life of our people here, where every one is prosperous and daily increasing his wealth."

"I am particularly struck with the fact that woman has been relieved from unwomanly work, and the children have time to play," said Mr. Sears. "With us the working women are mere factory slaves, and we have tried to keep the children out of workshops by laws that punish the parents and fine the employers, if they allow them to work. But they have not been able to stop child labor."

"How can it be otherwise, when your laws are merely patchwork, made to act as plasters—to cover up the wound instead of healing it. Here we have purified the blood, and the whole body remains strong and healthy." And Mr. Bartlett laughed good-naturedly as they entered the hotel, and met Farmer Hardy.

"Mr. Sears is anxious to know how you farmers get

a benefit from having the land free," said Mr. Bartlett as they seated themselves.

"I came from Ohio," began Mr. Hardy," and there in the first place I would have to burden myself with a heavy mortgage to pay for the farm or use my capital in paying for the land which I get for nothing here. This is a big item of itself. But in Ohio I found that when I sent my stuff to market it had to pay its share of the rent the commission merchant paid, as well as that of the wholesaler and the retailer. And when it reached the consumer he could only pay very little for it; so that when the whole expense of these several rents was taken out of the price the poor consumer paid, I had hardly enough left to cover the cost of raising. I have sent stuff to market that sold for several dollars, and yet I received only a few cents for my work. I have known my wheat to sell in the city markets for two and three times what I got for it, and when I saw the enormous rents the commission men had to pay, I knew it was my products that were paying them. Out here my stuff is handled by men who pay nothing for the use of the land on which they do business, and I get the full value of my products. If they add anything to the value by their work they do not take it out of mine. The difference is that, while in Ohio I got but a very small part of the selling value of my stuff, and farming did not pay, out here I get the full value of all I produce, and I am prospering beyond anything I could have expected."

"I should think that would attract too many competitors, and prices would run down," said Mr. Sears.

"So it would, if farming was the only business that was prosperous. But where all industries are equally so there is no extra inducement to become a farmer."

"You mean that the law of competition protects the farmers as well as the others?" said Mr. Sears inquiringly.

"Yes. It would be impossible to have the business men and manufacturers and all others prospering while farmers were not; for if they were we would go into competition with them in some of their occupations that paid better."

"Do you find any advantage in being near the city market?"

"I certainly do. When goods have to be hauled a thousand miles to reach the consumer on the farm, and the farmer's products have to be hauled the same distance to feed the men in the city, the charges for hauling them make it cost both of us much more than it would if the farms were as near as possible to the factory. We see this illustrated almost every day. The cheap coal at the mines is too dear when it reaches the farm, and the cheap grain on the farm is too dear when it reaches the consumers at the mine. Thus the farmer freezes for want of coal, and the miner starves for want of food. By bringing them nearer together the exchange of products is more cheaply made, and the benefit is mutual. With you the land-speculator is allowed to seize on all the land about your cities and carve it into city lots long years before the people need them, and the price of all the land is raised so high as to drive the farmer to the remote districts, where he is separated from his fellow men and forced to live the life of a hermit, without the comforts or advantages that are to be obtained by associating with his fellows.

"Here the farmer is the suburban resident of the city. His well-paved roads are but extensions of the

city streets. He has all the advantages of his city brother and is so familiar with his ways that you can find no marked distinction between him and the other men you meet here. Under these conditions the farmer becomes a free man—a prince among producers. His life is one of independence and wealth. But this is not all. With your farmers, the railroad monopolies dictate the terms of their existence. They take all the traffic will bear. Here the people control them as you do the postal business, and the farmers get their goods transported at something like the cost of the service. These are important advantages to us, and I cannot see where your farmers could lose anything by the change, except possibly the very remote chance of selling their land for more than it cost them; while on the other hand they would be more secure in the possession of their farms than they are now. And, retaining all of their present advantages, they would also receive those I have spoken of."

"You seem to think there is an interest that is common to all men who work in cities as well as those who work on farms," said Mr. Sears inquiringly.

"Certainly I do. Suppose the land-owners were made to leave more to the workers in the city. Is it not easy to see that the farmers would go into the cities unless they also received an equal increase? The pay in all occupations must rise and fall together; you can always be certain of that. If the pay is full, the land-speculator gets nothing. If it is less than the full product of labor, then it is because the land-owner has taken something for nothing. That's all there is to it."

"I see, I see," said Mr. Sears thoughtfully. "The whole plan is quite clear to me now. It narrows

right down to a contest between the industrious people on one side and the land-speculators on the other. What one loses the other takes. Well, in that case, my whole sympathies are on the side of the industrious people. I am obliged to you for making it so clear that the whole producing classes, including the farmers, are benefited by this means."

"I am thoroughly satisfied now," continued Mr. Sears, as they walked to the depot. I was very skeptical at first. Then, too, I feared the effect would be to level down all classes to one common lot; but I see now that each one receives his full reward in proportion to his abilities and industry much more certainly than with us; and even the lowest grade of workers live comfortably and know nothing of poverty or the fear of want."

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